United Nations system CEB/2015/1

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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First regular session of 2015
Paris, 29 April 2015

Summary of conclusions

I. Introduction

1. The first regular session of 2015 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General and hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 29 and 30 April 2015.

2. The formal session was held in the morning of 29 April and focused on the data revolution and climate change. Following the conclusion of the session, in the afternoon, the Board held its fifth review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the country level. In the morning on 30 April, the Board held a private meeting, during which it discussed lessons learned from the United Nations response to the Ebola crisis, and considered political issues on the agenda of the United Nations. In the afternoon, a retreat was held, during which executive heads exchanged views on new global threats and financing for development.

3. The present report contains the outcome of the formal proceedings of the first regular session of 2015 of CEB.

4. The agenda of the first regular session was as follows:

1. Reports of CEB High-level Committees;
   - (a) United Nations Development Group;
   - (b) High-level Committee on Management;
   - (c) High-level Committee on Programmes;
   - (d) Additional updates.
2. Issues of system-wide concern: the data revolution and climate change.
3. Other matters:
   - (a) Dates and venues of future session;
   - (b) Tribute to departing members.

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II. Reports of CEB High-level Committees

A. United Nations Development Group

5. The Chair of the United Nations Development Group briefed the Board on the ongoing activities of the Group and the outcome of the meeting of the Group held on 25 February 2015.

6. The Chair of the Group highlighted that 2015 was an important year for sustainable development, given that Member States had the opportunity to set the future global agenda through a series of major conferences to be held over the next 18 months. Those included the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, the Special Summit on Sustainable Development in New York, the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris and the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

7. She noted that the Group had updated its strategic priorities 2013-2016 for the biennium2015-2016, with a focus on: (a) achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda; (b) human rights; and (c) crisis and post-crisis transitions. She underscored that the emerging post-2015 development agenda presented a complex challenge for implementation, and the United Nations development system collectively looked forward to supporting Member States in that regard. She noted that joint communication and advocacy in the public domain would be increasingly important. In preparation for the United Nations summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda, to be held in September, the Group was in the process of planning a joint side event on the plans and contributions of the United Nations development system to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Member States would be invited to present their perspectives on priorities, strategies and the role of the United Nations development system.

8. Noting that the Group had taken a series of initiatives over the past two years to increase the impact of the development work of the United Nations system, the Chair of the Group said that the United Nations system was now in a good position to make a strong and meaningful contribution to the implementation of the new development agenda. The standard operating procedures for countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach had been signed by the Secretary-General and United Nations principals. Several executive heads had recorded video messages on the importance of the standard operating procedures and many had written to country directors supporting the implementation of the standard operating procedures. That demonstrated a good spirit of cooperation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. She emphasized that the global roll-out of the standard operating procedures would help to develop a more cohesive United Nations system, as requested by Member States. The new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks that were planned to be developed in some 60 countries in 2015 and 2016 offered an important opportunity in that regard. The Group had recently launched a United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks design innovation facility, which would help country teams to innovate by providing seed funding and technical support.

9. Recalling that the United Nations development system was now in its third year of implementing resolution 67/226, she noted that the Group had been working closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat from the outset to ensure robust monitoring and reporting on progress. According to the latest monitoring survey of programme countries of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, conducted by the Department, two-thirds of programme countries reported an interest in implementing some or all of the elements of the "Delivering as one" approach. In 78 per cent of "Delivering as one" countries, it was noted that there was less duplication of United Nations efforts as a result of the approach. Seventy-three per cent of "Delivering as one" countries confirmed that that made it easier for them to work with the multitude of organizations of the United Nations system at the country level.

10. The Chair of the Group stressed that enhancing the leadership and accountability of the resident coordinator system would continue to be a top priority for the Group, including the full implementation of the system-wide cost-sharing agreement for 2016-2017. During the 2014-2015 period, some 23 per cent of total cost had been expected to be shared among members of the Group, with the remainder funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Regrettably, not all entities of the Group had contributed their expected share in full; the shortfall thus had to be covered by strategic reserves.

11. For the 2016-2017 biennium, the Group would maintain the cost-sharing formula, with an exception for smaller or non-operational member entities, which would be requested to make a lower flat-fee contribution. She thanked the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for confirming that they would contribute their expected shares in full for 2016/2017. She noted that discussions with the other member entities were ongoing and expressed her hope that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly would approve the contribution of the Secretariat for the next funding cycle.

12. In view of the ongoing dialogue in the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, it was noted that the discussions were wide-ranging. The Group had been actively involved in supporting preparations for a series of workshops and a retreat, including by formulating several background papers. The dialogue in the Council had already had a positive impact, given that the initiative was bringing the United Nations development system together to consider some key issues which needed to be addressed for the benefit of an effective longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system.

13. **The Board thanked the Chair of the Group for her briefing. The final report of the meeting of the United Nations Development Group was formally cleared by members of the Group after the CEB session and was subsequently shared electronically with and endorsed by the Board.**

B. High-level Committee on Management

14. The Chair of the High-level Committee on Management introduced the report on the twenty-ninth session of the Committee, held on 19 and 20 March 2015 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

15. She recalled that the strategic plan for 2013-2016 of the Committee had provided member organizations with a clear road map, which was being systematically implemented and was already delivering concrete and tangible results. The plan would be adjusted as the post-2015 agenda developed. In that context, she noted that the Committee was also working closely with the United Nations Development Group to ensure coherence between global and country-level actions.

16. Among its current top priorities, the Committee actively engaged with the International Civil Service Commission in the context of its review of the conditions of service for United Nations system staff. The Board was informed that the Commission had made progress over the past months towards a common view on the elements of a future compensation system. The final proposals would be discussed at the July session of the Commission, prior to its submission to the General Assembly at its seventieth session. The review was expected to result in some degree of simplification, including moving to a unified salary scale. The proposed future package would likely provide adequate incentives for mobility to difficult and hardship duty stations. Organizations still needed to review the final outcome of the discussions to ensure that compensation levels for the most difficult duty stations remained competitive, in the light of the difficulty in recruiting staff of the needed calibre for such locations.

17. A key success criteria for the review would also be the extent to which it supported the various mobility initiatives of organizations of the United Nations system by providing adequate mechanisms to encourage lifelong mobility among headquarters duty stations and deployment of more staff from headquarters to field locations. Mindful of the broad spectrum of mandates and operational contexts of the various organizations of the United Nations system, any compensation system that is fit for purpose would have to allow for flexibility in order to enable managers to adapt to requirements as they arose. The Chair of the Committee stressed that it was important for organizations of the United Nations system to continue their joint and proactive approach to ensure that the needs and requirements of the system were properly addressed within the new United Nations common system.

18. The Chair of the Committee recalled that new staff members who assumed functions as from 1 January 2014 had a retirement age of 65 and that the Commission had confirmed its recommendation to the General Assembly that it extend the mandatory age of separation to 65 for current staff also. She noted that the Chair of the Commission had recently written to all executive heads to seek their views on the best implementation date.

19. The Board was informed that the Committee had requested the Commission to coordinate with the CEB Human Resources Network to ensure that all organizations were systematically consulted and that their diverse operational needs were duly and fully reflected in the proposal that would be developed regarding the implementation date of the proposal to extend the mandatory age of separation to 65. The CEB Human Resources Network was engaging in consultations to enable organizations to coordinate their positions in their responses to the Commission.

20. The Chair of the Committee informed the Board that the Committee had considered the proposed United Nations system approach to the data revolution that was before the Board for review and endorsement. The Committee recognized the complex and multifaceted nature of the topic and viewed the approach as an initial step towards a more comprehensive United Nations system response to the data revolution. The Committee noted the urgency for organizations of the United Nations system to seize the opportunity to leverage their data sources and position themselves as a central source of data for the world at large. In that respect, the world forum on sustainable development data could be a significant branding opportunity. The monitoring of progress made towards the advancement of the future sustainable development goals was expected to be more integrated and more thematically driven. That, in turn, would require granular, interoperable and comparable data to be shared among organizations and with Member States. She confirmed that the Committee remained committed to supporting the efforts of the Board on the data revolution by providing leadership in one of the initiatives, namely, the development of a United Nations system data catalogue to promote greater use of existing data assets within the United Nations system and by the public.

21. Turning to the topic of the environmental sustainability of United Nations operations, she recalled that the Committee had committed to the development and implementation of environmental sustainability management systems in each organization at a varied pace, depending on the readiness of its individual members. On the occasion of the Climate Summit, held in September 2014, the Secretary-General had sent a letter to all CEB members indicating that he expected the United Nations system to reach full compliance with the United Nations climate neutrality strategy and become effectively climate neutral by 2020 at the latest. The Chair of the Committee was pleased to report that the Committee had unanimously endorsed the system-wide road map for United Nations climate neutrality by 2020 put forward by the Environment Management Group and the related goals towards enhancing environmental sustainability of United Nations operations. The road map provided for approaches to measure and report on progress, including the identification of baselines, targets and best practices for the financing of sustainable measures.

22. She informed the Board that the Committee had approved the occupational health and safety framework developed by the United Nations system medical directors. The objective of the framework was to ensure that organizations of the United Nations system had effective tools to minimize preventable staff harm and optimize the occupational safety, health and working conditions of the staff.

23. The Chair of the Committee concluded by recalling the recent tragic events in Somalia, where an attack on a United Nations vehicle had killed four workers from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and highlighted, in that context, an initiative recently launched by the Committee on reconciling the duty of care for United Nations system personnel with the need to stay and deliver in high-risk environments. Five years had passed since the "how to stay" approach had been endorsed by CEB, and the Committee had decided to conduct a holistic examination of the programmatic need to stay and deliver against the organizational imperative of duty of care for staff in high-risk environments. The review was being carried out under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, with teams analysing five high-risk environments, namely, the Syrian Arab Republic,

Haiti, Ebola-affected countries, Afghanistan, and Mali and Somalia. As part of the review, the Committee was considering reframing the United Nations system approach from "how to stay" to "how to deliver", which would also be linked to the work of the Committee on new business models. Given that most safety and security-related instruments and initiatives came at a considerable financial cost, more engagement with Member States would be needed to ensure that such costs were reflected as an investment to deliver on mandates. The Committee aimed at bringing the outcome and recommendations from that work to the Board at its second regular session of 2015 in November.

24. **CEB took note of the progress made and endorsed the report on the twenty-ninth session of the High-level Committee on Management, including its approval of the occupational health and safety framework.**

C. High-level Committee on Programmes

25. The Chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes introduced the report on the twenty-ninth session of the Committee, held at the headquarters of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva on 11 and 12 March 2015.

26. The Chair of the Committee recalled that CEB, at its previous session, had called upon the Committee to assume its core function as a think tank for the Board, focusing in the immediate future on supporting the United Nations system in the transition to the post-2015 development agenda. Accordingly, the Committee had deepened its efforts on the issues of sustainable urbanization and youth employment as prototypes for applying the key elements of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular by piloting issue-based coalitions and multi-stakeholder partnerships as an entry point to operationalizing the agenda. Such efforts were built on the discussions held at a joint session of the High-level Committees on Programmes and Management on 9 October 2014.

27. The Committee was in the process of preparing, under the leadership of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), a paper on urbanization and sustainable development as a system-wide input to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to be held in Quito in October 2016. Multi-stakeholder partnerships were at the centre of that initiative. The Chair of the Committee conveyed the Committee's proposal for the issuance of a CEB statement to Habitat III to reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations system to supporting the emerging urban agenda and suggested that a draft be presented to the Board at its first regular session of 2016.

28. The Chair of the Committee observed that the Committee's deliberations had been substantive and analytical and, at times, revealed some valid ideological differences. For example, in analysing the role of urbanization in the path to sustainable development, its indispensability and inevitability were partly questioned, leading to an active debate as to whether there was a universal model for sustainable urbanization. That was an issue of key importance in the lead-up to Habitat III, and the Committee planned to analyse lessons learned from various urbanization experiences, with a view to developing a shared vision for "the urban future we want".

29. The Chair of the Committee noted that the problem of youth unemployment had reached the level of crisis in terms of its magnitude and depth and was tearing societies apart. Affecting youth in every country, youth unemployment was a development challenge that corresponded strongly to the universality characteristic of the post-2015 agenda. At its twenty-eighth session, the Committee had established a time-bound task team under the leadership of ILO and, at its twenty-ninth session, endorsed its terms of reference with the objective of launching a global initiative on decent jobs for youth by the end of 2015.

30. The key features of that initiative were broad multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at mobilizing high-level attention and scaled-up country-level action, backed by a global knowledge management platform. The Chair of the Committee underlined that it was intended as a practical initiative aimed at operationalizing normative standards into real impact on the ground and focused on the value added by the United Nations system. The possibility of piloting it at the country level would also be considered, in partnership with the United Nations Development Group. The Committee was seeking the endorsement of CEB for pursuing that important work, in line with the proposed terms of reference.

31. The Chair of the Committee informed the Board that the Committee had discussed in depth two of the five key elements of the post-2015 agenda identified by CEB, equality and data revolution, pursuant to the request of the Board for the Committee to consider in greater detail their practical implications.

32. The concept of equality was central to the universal and transformative nature of the new agenda. The Committee engaged in a spirited discussion on equality as a potential driver for greater mainstreaming of human rights and an overarching principle influencing the post-2015 efforts of the United Nations system. In particular, it deliberated on the practical methods and implications of an approach targeted at addressing inequalities within the context of the post-2015 agenda.

33. The Committee affirmed that placing inequality reduction at the centre of United Nations system efforts was critical to realizing the key objective of the new agenda of leaving no one behind, and that the United Nations system should seize the opportunity to pursue a bold new approach with equality as its defining principle. The Committee acknowledged that that would represent a significant paradigm shift for the United Nations system and would have profound implications for its development work. Recalling the discussion at the Secretary-General's retreat, held in March 2015, the Chair noted that the tension, which at times existed within the United Nations system, between a principled approach and operational realities deserved the attention and consideration of CEB.

34. Bearing in mind those complexities, the Committee agreed to develop in 2015, under the leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a position paper of the Committee to articulate a framework to guide the approach of the United Nations system on inequality and human rights in the context of the post-2015 agenda.

35. The Committee, as requested by CEB at its previous session, reviewed the proposed approach for the United Nations system response to the data revolution, prepared by a core group. The Committee generally supported the proposed approach and its various initiatives. In providing comments on the proposed approach, the Committee had underscored the importance of paying due attention to

coordination within existing activities and processes, resource requirements and implications, and the respective roles of official statistics and open-source data in the context of the data revolution.

36. The Chair of the Committee concluded by emphasizing that by engaging deeply on a selected number of key strategic issues as it did at its twenty-ninth session, the Committee had been able to enhance its ability to assist CEB in responding in a coherent and coordinated manner to emerging global challenges of concern to the entire United Nations system.

37. **CEB thanked the Chair for his briefing and endorsed the report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its twenty-ninth session.**

D. Additional updates

1. UN-Water

38. In his capacity as Chair of UN-Water, the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization provided an update on the activities of UN-Water. Noting the contribution of UN-Water to the work of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, he underscored the need for United Nations system entities to continue their successful collaboration and coordination around common messages and technical support to Member States throughout the next phase of the process towards the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. He reported that UN-Water had shifted its focus to the development of a set of indicators on the proposed water and sanitation-related targets which represented a broadening of its agenda and included such issues as water quality, wastewater management, water use efficiency, integrated water resources management and the protection of water-related ecosystems. A new UN-Water initiative had been launched to produce global baseline data by the end of 2017 to address those new issues.

39. Turning to joint communication and advocacy initiatives undertaken within the context of UN-Water, he noted that the 2014 World Toilet Day, held on 19 November, had focused on the topic of inequalities. Under the leadership of the World Health Organization, the 2014 edition of the UN-Water publication entitled "Global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking water" had been launched in conjunction with World Toilet Day. World Water Day, observed on 22 March each year and coordinated by UNDP in 2015, and the 2015 World Water Development Report, published by UNESCO on behalf of UN-Water, were both dedicated to the topic of water and sustainable development. The alignment of themes and messages had proven to be successful in generating considerable interest in the issue worldwide. In 2015, World Toilet Day would highlight the linkages between sanitation and nutrition, and in 2016 World Water Day would focus on water and jobs, under the leadership of ILO. The Chair of UN-Water concluded by thanking the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and UNOPS for the support provided to UN-Water.

40. **CEB thanked the Chair of UN-Water for his update and for his leadership.**

2. The 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

41. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) briefed the Board on the outcome of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had undertaken a review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The session had resulted in the adoption of a political declaration calling for accelerated action in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

42. She underscored the influential role of the joint CEB statement to the 20-year review, which had conveyed the sustained commitment and readiness of the United Nations system to act in support of gender equality and women's rights. She added that the strong messages contained in the statement had been echoed in the political declaration adopted by Member States. Calls for systematic gender mainstreaming, mobilizing resources to deliver results and monitoring progress through data and robust accountability systems echoed the pledge of the United Nations system to step up efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. As a critical next step in that regard, the Head of the Entity urged all CEB members that had not yet done so to set targets for tracking and allocating resources for gender equality programming. The United Nations system had an important role to play in supporting Member States in championing gender equality and the empowerment of women in all intergovernmental policy processes in 2015, including financing for development, the post-2015 development agenda and climate change.

43. She informed the Board of the global leaders' commitment forum on gender equality and women's empowerment, to be held in September 2015, and invited CEB members to develop new initiatives and mobilize resources for achieving gender equality by 2030 within the context of the UN-Women initiative on the theme "Planet 50-50 by 2030: step it up for gender equality".

44. **CEB thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women for her presentation and for reminding CEB that championing gender equality and the empowerment of women was the responsibility of the entire United Nations system. Setting targets for tracking and allocating resources for gender equality programming was an important accountability tool for the United Nations system in that regard.**

3. United Nations research and training institutes

45. The Rector of the United Nations University briefed CEB on a planned initiative to strengthen interaction and collaboration among United Nations policy and research entities and select non-United Nations think tanks and research organizations. Whereas demand for policy research was high among organizations of the United Nations system, Member States, intergovernmental entities and research institutions inside and outside the United Nations had, at times, faced significant challenges in meeting the specific needs of the broader United Nations community. Those challenges included limited resources and capacity to translate research findings into policy formulations and to present research outputs in ways that appealed to policymakers; barriers to accessing, aggregating and analysing United Nations data and knowledge; and mismatches between demand and supply of

research topics and outputs. He reported that the mismatch between demand and supply was exacerbated by a lack of forums for dialogue among research entities both within and outside the United Nations. In response to those challenges and by building on ongoing efforts to foster greater coherence across United Nations system research and training institutions, a round table of two to three days would be organized in Geneva early in 2016 to bring together United Nations research institutes and policy units and select non-United Nations think tanks and research organizations. The round table would provide a forum for United Nations and non-United Nations research entities to explore measures to more effectively inform key United Nations policy processes in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights. The meeting would seek to sensitize the broader research community to the research demands of the United Nations; raise awareness among United Nations policy units of available research assets; and foster increased interaction among research entities focusing on the work of the United Nations.

46. **CEB members thanked the Rector for his intervention.**

4. Human security

47. The Under-Secretary-General for Management, speaking in his capacity as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security, provided an update on the status of human security in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and the formulation of the sustainable development goals. He noted that considerable progress had been made towards a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the concept of human development with greater emphasis on people and progress. In adopting General Assembly resolution 66/290, Member States had agreed that human security called for a people-centred approach that strengthened the protection and empowerment of all people and communities. The importance of human security and its relevance to the post-2015 development agenda was further recognized during a recent thematic debate convened by the President of the General Assembly. In his view, the human security approach supported the realization of the sustainable development goals in several important and distinct ways, including by shifting the focus to the individual; focusing on the vulnerable and marginalized; supporting an integrated approach; and providing a framework for partnerships and for cooperation among organizations of the United Nations system. To further deepen United Nations system collaboration on the issue, an inter-agency working group on human security had been established to develop a framework for cooperation to expand the application of the human security approach to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Building on existing tools and instruments, the working group planned to formulate practical guidelines for organizations of the United Nations system for integrating a human security approach into their work on a voluntary basis.

48. **CEB thanked the Under-Secretary-General for Management for his update.**

III. Issues of system-wide concern: the data revolution and climate change

A. The data revolution

49. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Director-General of ILO moderated the discussion on the data revolution. He opened the discussion by recalling the rich debate on the subject that had taken place at the previous session of CEB, which had concluded with a request for the three CEB pillars to develop a coherent United Nations system response to the data revolution. He noted that specialists from the seven entities that had agreed to lead the effort, namely, UNESCO, the World Bank Group, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the United Nations regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, had produced for consideration by the Board an initial United Nations system approach to leveraging the data revolution for sustainable development. Thanking all who had contributed to the document, the Secretary-General observed that Member States had clearly identified the need for support in developing their capacity to collect, manage and utilize data. The organizations of the United Nations system ought to strive to meet the expectations of all stakeholders to fully benefit from the data revolution. He stressed the importance of enhancing the capacity of the United Nations system to harness data to inform internal programming and decision-making, including by breaking through organizational barriers that inhibited the sharing of data and taking measures to improve data coherence. Emphasizing that fully implementing the vision set out in the report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, entitled "A world that counts: mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development", would require sustained commitment, focus and investments, he called upon the United Nations system to embrace innovation and openness and to work together to strengthen its collective ability to put data at the service of sustainable development. He concluded by noting that the discussion within CEB would lay the foundation for a much larger process to which each member of the Board had an imperative to contribute.

50. The Deputy Secretary-General underscored the importance of reliable data for reaching the goal of leaving no one behind. He identified as a major issue the need to resolve the conflict between, on one hand, the limited availability of authorized and validated information to satisfy programme requirements and, on the other hand, the overabundance of data, due to advances in technology, that is not verified as accurate by authoritative sources. He stressed the need to assess the risks associated with decision-making based on data that may or may not prove reliable. He acknowledged the broad range of data-related advances currently under way within the organizations of the United Nations system, noting in particular the activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the development of its humanitarian data exchange, the innovative work of the United Nations Global Pulse, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP and many others. He concluded by highlighting the many challenges faced by the global community as it was coming to terms with the data revolution, including the opportunities and risks of utilizing so-called "big-data"; the need to address resource constraints for any new initiatives; the need to develop principles and standards, especially as they related to privacy, data security and other human rights issues; and the crucial need to strengthen the ability of Member States to produce quality statistics.

51. Introducing the document entitled "United Nations system approach for a data revolution", the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs stated that the initiatives contained in the document set the stage for the United Nations system response to the call for a data revolution in sustainable development. He described internal coordination activities that would strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to utilize new and emerging technologies and sources of data. Developed by a working group of specialists, the approach proposed four concrete initiatives drawn largely from the recommendations contained in the report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. Initiative 1 expanded the capacity to drive data innovation through the development of a United Nations system data innovation laboratory, building on existing activities in this area. Initiative 2 strengthened data exchange and communication capabilities across the United Nations system by seeking to create the foundation for data visualization and dashboard capability across the system. Initiative 3 created and strengthened partnerships for coordination and capacity-building in data-driven sustainable development through a world forum on sustainable development data, and initiative 4 promoted the greater use of existing data assets within the United Nations system and by the public through the creation of a United Nations system data catalogue. The Under-Secretary-General indicated that whereas these "quick-win" initiatives addressed the crucial elements of the data revolution, the formulation of a more comprehensive programme of work that would address the multifaceted and complex nature of the data revolution was still needed.

52. He noted that the Department for Economic and Social Affairs served as the secretariat of the Statistical Commission and, in partnership with other United Nations system entities, was firmly committed to implementing Initiative 2, which was fully aligned with the endorsement by the Commission of a road map for the creation and implementation of a framework of indicators for the post-2015 development agenda. He concluded by emphasizing that, as part of its programme of work, the Department would continue to support fundamental components of the data revolution, including the development of statistical capacity at the country level, and promote the development and use of tools for data analysis and integration of the sustainable development goals. In addition, the Department would support the development of standards and principles related to data protection, data privacy, data governance and the human rights dimension of the data revolution, under the leadership of Member States through the Statistical Commission and other mechanisms.

53. The Executive Director of UNEP focused his intervention on the efforts of UNEP to create a digital platform for providing open access to national and regional information and global datasets and visualization, mapping and publishing tools for that data. That platform, known as UNEPLive, strengthened the universal, integrated nature of the post-2015 development agenda by supporting the growing demand for substantiated and contextualized knowledge about the environment. He noted that the initiative had the ability to integrate with existing national open data platforms and provided up-to-date information. UNEP was working with countries to implement national reporting systems to support sharing and data exchange among line ministries including reporting to national, regional and international bodies. By serving as an authoritative platform combining official country statistics with various global data sources, including those from geospatial and social media,

UNEPLive supported the proposals in Initiative 1 for a data innovation lab and those in Initiative 2 for a visualization capability, given that it had the ability to support policymakers with timely and disaggregated data. The Executive Director concluded by noting that the establishment of a sustainable development goals ontology was a necessary component for the integration of linked data and big data from many different sources. UNEP had already conducted various workshops that explored the use of existing ontologies and the creation of new ontologies in order to structure, relate and integrate the complex flow of data for sustainable development goal indicators.

54. The Executive Director of UNICEF observed that the United Nations system could benefit from a sense of priorities, noting that, with the tremendous amount of data produced every day, United Nations agencies could not become a central source of data but could strive to achieve practical actions through effective data analysis. He cautioned against a "one United Nations lab" approach, noting that innovations are pursued locally at the country and community levels, and it will be challenging for a single lab to pull it all together. He noted the importance of disaggregation of data as an essential step and called for a dedicated approach to innovation, especially in partnership with United Nations country teams, local governments and communities to utilize data for effective planning and delivering results on the ground.

55. The Executive Director of UNFPA stressed the need for organizations of the United Nations system to fully leverage new technologies. In this context, he noted the success of UNFPA in assisting countries to more fully develop civil registration capabilities. He emphasized that more needed to be done, since very large populations were currently being left behind owing to the lack of such facilities in many countries. UNFPA remained committed to fully utilizing data and stood ready to participate in the initiatives, particularly with regard to the data laboratory described in Initiative 1 and the world forum on sustainable development data.

56. The Board agreed that reliable, consistent, accessible and harmonized data remained fundamental to the successful achievement of development goals. It acknowledged that official statistics continued to be the mainstay of policy decisions, and that more than half of the Member States represented in organizations of the United Nations system experienced challenges in performing even the most basic forms of civil registration. In view of this, strengthening the capacity of Member States in this area should remain a priority for the United Nations system, not only in terms of the quality of data but in the timeliness and frequency of data collection and its harmonization. The United Nations system should support the Statistical Commission in that effort. It was noted that many interventions were made on the basis of civil registration. Without registration of births, individuals lacked identity documents, without which access to basic services, such as food, health and employment, could prove difficult. In addition, only through the reliable registration of cause of death could health surveillance of populations be carried out with any degree of confidence.

57. Noting that vast expertise in data existed outside the United Nations, the Board stressed the need to focus the energies of the United Nations system on those areas where it could provide added value, such as the initiative on the world forum on sustainable development data, which would draw on the convening power of the United Nations. The importance of partnering with external entities, whether the

private sector, civil society or others, was also highlighted. Agencies pointed out that some corporate entities had more insight into local conditions, such as those of health and nutrition, than did United Nations agencies or Governments. It was noted, however, that partnerships of that nature should be carefully managed to ensure the privacy and security of data.

58. The importance of capacity-building was stressed, drawing on the work of specialized institutes, such as the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. To realize a truly sustainable data revolution, the United Nations system needed not only to collect and compile data but also to use, analyse and disseminate information, build data literacy skills, train the next generation of statisticians and use new technologies to update and innovate within national statistical systems, striking a balance between traditional and new sources of data.

59. The Board noted that agencies had developed extensive expertise in many areas of data analysis, citing as examples the census work conducted by UNFPA. Sectoral initiatives and innovations in using external data and crowdsourcing were additional areas of strength of the United Nations system.

60. The value of storing data over long periods of time was also noted. As the technology used to analyse and visualize data continued to develop, some organizations had discovered the usefulness of retrospective analysis and were able to extract value from data kept over many years.

61. The Director-General of ILO, in his capacity as moderator, thanked all participants for their contributions to the discussion and stressed the need for a unified system-wide approach to the data revolution, noting that the future sustainable development goals, their targets and indicators would all require reliable data. Within the United Nations system there were many valuable data initiatives, which could be expanded in scope and scale.

62. **The Board endorsed the proposed United Nations system approach to the data revolution and agreed that: UNICEF and the World Food Programme would lead Initiative 1; the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, together with other interested agencies, would lead Initiatives 2 and 3; and the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, with the support of the CEB secretariat would lead Initiative 4. Furthermore, the Board agreed that, as a next step, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would administer a survey and conduct consultations on the vision of CEB member organizations for realizing the potential for a data revolution. The information collected would be used to create a more comprehensive United Nations system response to the data revolution to be presented to the Board at a future session.**

B. Climate change

63. In opening the discussion on climate change, the Secretary-General recalled the twin objectives of the Climate Summit held in 2014, namely, to mobilize political will for a universal climate agreement and to catalyse ambitious action on the ground. Those objectives informed the actions of the United Nations system in support of the efforts of Member States to reach a bold and forward-looking agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015. Key areas of the engagement strategy, for which the support of the United Nations system was critical, included serving as a neutral broker to help parties to address contentious issues; advancing climate action through the Lima-Paris Action Agenda; supporting climate finance, facilitating South-South cooperation and engaging the private sector; mobilizing the public by reaching out to all segments of society; and deepening United Nations system-wide coordination and coherence. The Secretary-General expressed his expectation that all CEB member organizations would honour their commitments to the United Nations climate neutrality strategy and become climate neutral by 2020 at the latest. Recent efforts to "green" the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund were a welcome development. He invited the Board to share its views on how the United Nations system could further strengthen its support for ambitious climate action.

64. The Executive Director of UNEP served as moderator of the discussion on climate change. Before opening the floor, he invited the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, the Administrator of UNDP, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change, to share their views on the topic.

65. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change observed that momentum towards a climate agreement was building, with Member States increasingly signalling their willingness to overcome differences and converge on a long-lasting framework that would lead to decarbonization of the economy, protect growth and development and support developing countries. Consensus was emerging on a Paris agreement as a legal instrument under the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, which would be universal in nature. The agreement was expected to be comprehensive in scope, addressing mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology and capacity-building. Some important details of the agreement continued to be subject to negotiation, including the application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities to various elements of the agreement; responding to the urgency of adaptation; the scaling-up of financing; and the role of non-State actors. Turning to the relationship between climate action and development, the Executive Secretary underscored that controlling global greenhouse gas emissions was essential for development. Seen in that context, climate action represented the gateway to delivering on the sustainable development goals. The regressive effects of climate change on development gains were already obvious and would only increase exponentially if left unchecked. Climate action was as much about decreasing global greenhouse gas emissions as it was about increasing the development and growth benefits of every unavoidable ton of global greenhouse gas. The entire United Nations system had an important role to play in demonstrating that climate action was the greatest enabler of sustainable development. By taking climate change into account in all aspects of its operations and by providing climate solutions and examples of the transformative power of climate-related initiatives, organizations of the United Nations system could make a strong contribution to an enduring climate agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties and beyond.

66. Noting that adaptation was a critical issue, especially for low-income countries, the Administrator of UNDP observed that the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties needed to include a balanced approach that

addressed both adaptation and mitigation measures. The United Nations system had an important role to play in supporting countries by building their capacity to attract climate finance. Other areas of United Nations system support included assisting in the formulation of intended nationally determined contributions and in integrating climate risk into national development plans. To date, UNDP had supported more than 80 countries in this area. She announced that the Green Climate Fund had approved UNDP as the first United Nations entity accredited to access the resources of the Fund for supporting developing countries.

67. Speaking on the topic of the linkages between climate finance and financing for sustainable development, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs pointed out that climate finance was part of the broader financing for development agenda, although both processes were distinct. He highlighted four points that needed to be addressed within the context of climate financing, including the need for additional funding for combating climate change; carbon pricing; a balanced approached between adaption and mitigation action; and an agreement on a framework and trajectory for raising the $100 billion that had been committed for the initial capitalization of the Green Climate Fund.

68. The Assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change emphasized that sustainable development and climate action were both part of a comprehensive post-2015 development agenda and noted that 12 of the 17 proposed sustainable development goals included climate-related targets. The Climate Summit held in 2014 had galvanized support for climate action and resulted in a wide range of new initiatives and activities that demonstrated that the transition to a low-carbon economy was within reach. Those specific examples could provide inspiration and impetus in the preparations for the agreement to be reached at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties. Common climate messages were needed to manage the complexity of the topic.

69. Before opening the floor, the Executive Director of UNEP, as moderator of the discussion, added that an intelligent narrative needed to be crafted for supporting progressive decarbonization of the economy within a sustainable development framework. Shortfalls in climate finance posed a serious problem at a time when many countries have started to realize the magnitude of the adaptation challenge. He called upon the United Nations system to act together and to recognize the relevance of the climate change agenda in all areas, citing the Director-General of the World Health Organization, who had stated in one of her public statements that any climate change agreement was also a health agreement.

70. CEB members highlighted a range of issues that needed to be addressed as the global community strove to tackle causes and effects of climate change. It was pointed out that the process towards greater urbanization resulted in a higher overall carbon footprint, requiring a change in patterns of how energy was generated. Whereas climate change is expected to have a notable impact on global food security, agricultural production itself currently contributed around 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, a number that is likely to increase to 30 per cent by 2050. There were many instruments already available to support climate-smart agriculture. For example, the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme of the International Fund for Agricultural Development channelled climate finance to smallholder farmers to help to build their resilience to climate change. By 2018, climate change would be mainstreamed in all rural development programmes supported by the Fund.

71. Capacity-building remained a great challenge and urgent need, especially in developing countries. Many developing countries lacked the capacity and funding to effectively address their adaptation needs. The United Nations system had an important role to play in supporting countries in that regard. Other areas where organizations of the United Nations system could make a valuable contribution to the efforts of Member States were in generating climate science and data; providing solutions for energy and carbon pricing; raising awareness that an ambitious climate agreement would also provide tangible co-benefits for other sectors, such as health; investing in climate science and knowledge; promoting climate change education, in the context of education on sustainable development, and public awareness; and enhancing the interdisciplinary climate change knowledge base, taking into account traditional and indigenous knowledge. In this context, the ongoing work of the Secretary-General's scientific advisory board on climate change was recalled. The Board was also informed that the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund had already developed new investment instruments that supported low carbon development.

72. The Secretary-General concluded by thanking CEB members for their contributions to the discussion and their commitment to supporting Member States in implementing the future climate agreement in a coherent and integrated manner. He identified five additional areas where leadership of the United Nations system was essential, namely, supporting countries in preparing timely and ambitious intended nationally determined contributions; advancing implementation of the initiatives under the Lima-Paris Action Agenda; encouraging developed countries to fulfil their Green Climate Fund pledges; communicating the co-benefits of climate action; and ensuring full compliance with the United Nations climate neutrality strategy and becoming climate neutral by 2020 at the latest.

IV. Other matters

A. Dates and venues of future sessions

73. **The Board approved the dates of its second regular session of 2015, to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York and the Greentree Foundation in Manhasset, New York, on 18 and 19 November 2015, respectively.**

74. The dates of the first regular session of 2016, to be held in the second quarter of 2016 at the headquarters of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, would be decided upon further consultation with Board members.

B. Tribute to departing members

75. On behalf of the Board, the Secretary-General paid tribute to the following members who would be leaving their positions: Raymond Benjamin, Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization; Koji Sekimizu, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization; Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Kim Won-soo, who would be leaving his position as Secretary of CEB. Simona Petrova, Director of the CEB secretariat, was appointed Acting Secretary of CEB.